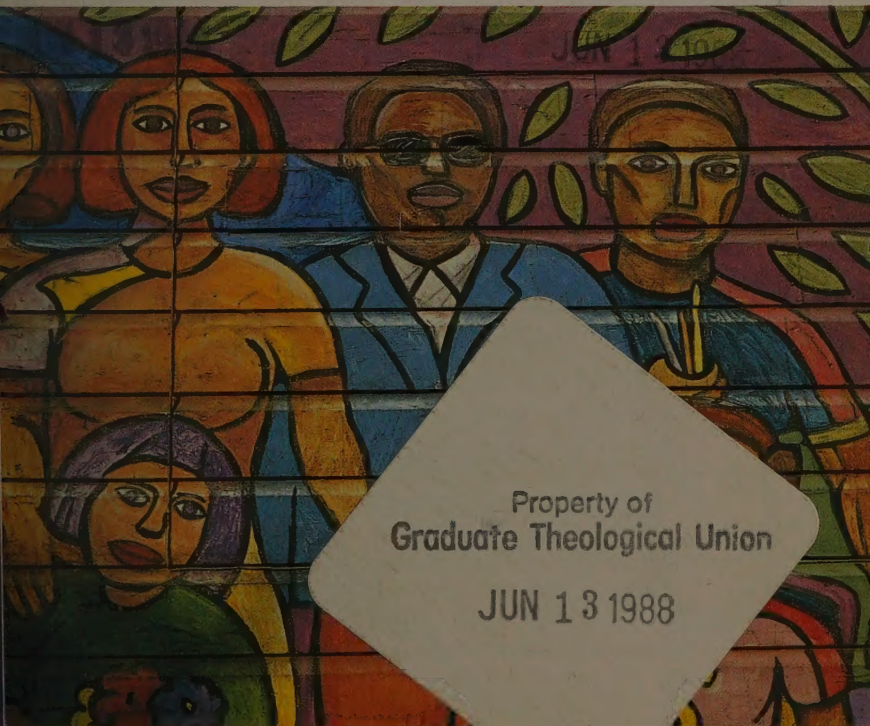


LUTHERAN WOMAN TODAY

JULY 1988

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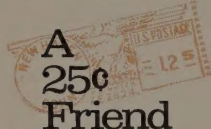


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**Support One Another
in Our Callings**

FEATURES



Support One Another in Our Callings

Sally Simmel

On Being Devotional *Susan B. Krass*

A 25-cent Friend *Pauline Joyce Sheehan*

Free Gifts You Can Give Anyone, Anytime

Martha J. Beckman

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Editor's Notes

artin Luther would be ecstatic at
creasing importance the church
cing on a word dear to his heart:
ll.

her article on page 5 of this issue,
Simmel recounts Luther's words
questioner: "How is it possible
ou are *not* called? You have
s been in some state or station;
ave always been a husband or
a boy or girl, a servant. . . . See,
e is without commission and
3. . . ."

re is more to it, of course, than
r being in a situation; one looks
e situation for a nod from God
ys, "Go to it. This is my work.
now that you are just the person,
time, that I chose to carry it out."
ese wonderfully exciting, rocky
when the Evangelical Lutheran
h in America is, stone by stone,
its foundation, I see called
e all around me.

se called people at 8765 West
is Road in Chicago . . .

to the bishop and executive direc-
who work so tirelessly and
ely to shape church units worthy
eing people in the congregations;
to the staff people of the ELCA,
of whom have left family behind
r—for who knows how long?
n in a new city, they work, write,
ct workshops, counsel others, do
sin;

to the office workers from the
go area—some of them Chris-
som other denominations—who
in their work for the ELCA an inter-
tial and ecumenical calling.

I also see called people all over the
church. . . .

—In the hardworking board
members and synodical women's
organization presidents, one of whom
recently confessed that while her task
seems insurmountable, she was drawn
to it "out of obedience to her Lord";

—In the voices of the many who
phone in their comment and thanks for
the support that people, resources and
articles have given them in their tasks;

—In the parishioners who under-
stand more fully than clergy or profes-
sional church workers what ministry in
daily life is all about.

All are called people; each one of us
is. All of us are human beings who
need to be bolstered in our called-ness.
Luther understood that need. So did
the planners of Women of the ELCA,
whose purpose statement asks women
to "support one another in their
callings."

That means giving *and* receiving:
giving support to others (which is
usually easier) and allowing oneself to
receive support from others (which is
usually harder). And it's all a
wonderful, cyclical idea that begins
with God. All we have to do, as called
people, is continue the spiritual wave
that God has put into motion.

Nancy J. Stelling

LETTERS

Letter to Letter

When I first read [the bilingual article "A Passion Sunday Meditation" (March **LWT**)] I didn't pay very much attention. However, the May issue of **LWT** came and it contained a letter which disturbed me. It stated, "Language unites and if we are truly united, we must be united in all things . . ."

This past weekend I attended a renewal retreat. The Scripture was read in Spanish and English. We sang Spanish and English hymns. The worship was the richer for the blend of both cultures. It was wonderfully stirring and meaningful. We were one body of Christ celebrating the Eucharist (with tortilla bread) in unity.

Unity and sameness are two very different words. As Christians we are not called to sameness. We are called to be united in Christ as one body but with many different members; this includes language and culture. Let's not forget the diversity of language spoken at Pentecost.

Melanie Wright Wessels
Shamrock, TX

As a long-time fan of the wisdom of Edna Hong, I enjoyed her article in the March **LWT**, and was surprised to read Linda Waechter's criticism in the May issue.

As a visitor of nursing homes, I know that what Hong says is true; if Waechter works in a nursing home she should know shut-ins need more mental stimulation than their caregivers, alone, can provide. If every WELCA member would visit one shut-

in one hour on a regular monthly basis (weekly would be better) thus giving the shut-in something (someone) to look forward to, she (the visitor) might receive a blessing no paid job could duplicate. Some of the people we visit are so "down" when we arrive, their voices are barely audible, but after an hour's visit they are bright, cheerful and some even crack jokes. This is a blessing no money can buy.

Carolyn Copeland
Phoenix, AZ

In or out of context, the quotation from my article "The Eleventh Commandment" [March **LWT**] is unfortunate. I can say is that I never meant to put down nursing homes, their resident staff. Heavens to Betsy, I have a sister who is beautifully and lovingly being cared for in one in Wisconsin. When the time comes when I can no longer care for my partner and myself, we gratefully take up residence in a nursing home and praise God that the church and good Christian men and women have provided homes for us.

Edna Hong
Northfield, MN

The Visitor

I was touched by the short story "The Visitor" [May **LWT**]. I have wanted to visit a nursing home to share the lives of my two boys, and also expose them to new experiences and friendships. Your article made me "take the first step" and actually visit a nursing home the next day. Now I plan to

weekly. We have already made a new
end, Hazel. What joy filled her eyes
I brought baby Nicholas toward her.
Allison Toso
Redmond, WA

File on the Subject of Mothers

must applaud you for all your articles
the May issue that were so appropriate to Mother's Day. They were
completely in step with what I feel the
w ELCA is about—affirming
women's strength and resourcefulness.
Because your articles applied to
th childless mothers as well as birth
others, I [thought] I would find an
icle that would address the pain of
ertile women. It is estimated that in
U.S. there are 4–5 million women
o know the emotional and some-
es physical pain that accompanies
inability to bear children. I pray
t **LWT** will deal compassionately
h this concern in the future.

Judy Conger
Peoria, IL

ad with interest and dismay your
cles on working mothers in the May
e.
feel you reported the exceptions
ier than the rule. Many employers
e only token interest in doing
othing to help with child care.
estigate the lack of good facilities,
the cost of those acceptable in
parison to the female wage scale.
quire of the churches, Lutheran or
erwise, who even are aware of the
olem, let alone address it. Ask
king mothers of babies under 18
ths where they go to find a sitter.

Audrey Witt
Farmington Hills, MI

lize that "Workplace Changes for
king Mothers" (May **LWT**) is from
urce outside the Lutheran church.
ever, I feel some editing would

have been appropriate. The wording
from La Leche League International
regarding the percentages of mothers
who nurse—"58.6% of mothers NOT
WORKING"? Come on! Every mother
is a working mother!

There is a crisis in child care in this
country. We need to raise the
consciousness of Lutheran women.
Let's just watch how we refer to
women who work inside and outside
the home. Our future depends on
being able to work together for our
children.

Laurie Line
El Cajon, CA

No More Recipes

As I was reading my April **LWT**, I was
disappointed, to say the least, to find a
recipe—"Spiced Milk." I thought I was
getting one magazine without
recipes—but was mistaken.

Let's not have any more.

Marie Reetz
Webster, SD

Bible Study

So far on a scale of 1 to 10 [*Arise to
Life!*] would not even be a 2. The
woman who wrote her four-year-old
enjoyed one of the articles—in about
two years [that child] will be ready for
the Bible study material in **LWT**. [Why]
continue wasting a precious evening
[with] 3rd and 4th grader material?

Luella Curran
Ft. Collins, CO

■ *Due to the volume of mail Lutheran
Woman Today receives, we are unable
to reply to letters to the editor. Please
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CONTRIBUTORS

How we "Support One Another in Our Callings" is **Sally Simmel's** focus in her article on page 5, in which she seeks to help readers identify their callings as Christians. Simmel, a lay person, is the Director for Daily Life Ministry in the Division for Ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.



"The Silences of Summer," a creative meditation on Mary Magdalene, makes up this month's "Season's Best." (The church remembers her on July 22.) Writers **Chris and Bob Sitze** have been frequent writers of devotional and curricular resources for the church. Bob is currently on the staff of the ELCA's Division for Congregational Life as a program specialist. The Sitzes are the parents of three children.



Susan B. Krass of Levittown, Pennsylvania, contributes her thoughts "On Being Devotional." A full-time homemaker, Krass is active in the parents' organization of her son's sheltered workshop, in groups that foster awareness of Central American issues, in study and women's groups in her congregation—and in the YMCA. She formerly served as Social Concerns Secretary for Lutheran Church Women, one of the predecessor church women's groups of the ELCA.



We introduce **Sue Edison-Swift**, who has recently joined the **LWT** staff as editorial specialist, by reprinting her article "Family Crisis," the story of how the concerns and prayers of others helped a miracle happen. Sue, her husband Paul, and daughter Annie recently moved to Park Ridge, Illinois from Middleton, Wisconsin.





SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER IN OUR CALLINGS

SALLY SIMMEL

phone rang the other morning at 7. Most of my friends know I'm not a singing person, so I wasn't surprised the voice at the other end was almost indistinguishable, disguised by a low, gravelly tone. I knew it was an emergency.

We have to decide today whether or not to take Dad off the respirator. I'm not sure. We don't know if he wants that. But I think he does. All the messes he has given me these past weeks make me think he is ready to 'go home.' What if he's not hearing him right?"

My friend Carol needed support and encouragement. She knew the prayers of her family had been with her and her family for weeks. Another friend had assured her that she had confidence in Carol's ability of perception and that she probably was receiving her father's message correctly.

The weeping subsided as Carol recounted her experience of being a daughter, a relationship to which she was now called in a most compelling way.

I hung up the phone and the words hit me. "Support one another in our callings." That's exactly what **Lutheran Woman Today** had asked me to write about some months ago. And here, in the person of my friend Carol, were those words in action, in real life. Carol's calling, at the moment, was to be a daughter. Mine was to be her friend—a listening, caring one. Funny how our callings are so often right in front of us, yet we don't always recognize them.

I'm reminded that Luther used such ordinary examples when people protested to him, "How can I be called? I'm not a pastor or a deacon!" He patiently



responded, "How is it possible that you are *not* called? You have always been in some state or station; you have always been a husband or wife, a boy or girl, a servant. . . . See, no one is without commission and calling, so no one is without some kind of work."

"Support one another in our callings." Let's look more closely at these life-giving words from the purpose statement of Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

CALLINGS

It's important to notice that this word from the statement is plural, not singular. Think. When in your life have you had only one calling? Life's not that easy. Right now, for instance, my callings include, among others, being a daughter, sister, mother, friend, colleague, professional and church member.

Our callings allow us to respond to God through a life in Christ and faithful service in the world. That means we are called to participate in God's creative and saving work as colleagues. And we do that wherever we find ourselves: at home, in church, in the community, in the world—using the gifts that have

been given us. Usually we don't need to search for new places to minister. Opportunities are already there for us. In truth, we don't need to "decide" to minister. Rather we are already ministering—responding to God's call. And often we are called to be just where we are.

Our call to serve in the world comes in the sacrament of Baptism, and we respond to that call throughout life in a variety of settings.

"Usually we don't need to search for new places to minister. The opportunities are already there for us!"

one of my favorite "call" stories involved James and his much younger brother, David. David had overheard James and their parents talking about James's plans to attend seminary, and James felt called by God to be a pastor.

David wanted to know if God had called James on the phone. "If he calls I'm going to hang up," David decided. Someday David will respond to James's call too—probably as a fireman or lawyer.

What callings do you find yourself in now? List them in your mind and write them in the space below, so you can give yourself some personal affirmation and see the breadth of your activity with God in your world.

SUPPORT

How shall we come up with a definition of this loaded word? Believe it or not, Webster's has some help here. Under "support" the dictionary uses words and phrases like: "to endure, to bear, to keep up, to hold up, to give courage, to give confidence, to help or comfort." There it is in a nutshell. But, let's enrich it. We can enrich that definition with our Christian experience.

When I look back over the first issues of *Woman Today*, it's been said well. Mary Ylvisaker Nilsen, in the first issue, wrote: "The compassionate, caring community is like a fort. That

community provides strength and protects us. It also gives us a safe place to be accepted and to accept, to succeed and fail, to comfort and be comforted."

Barbara Lundblad and Norma Everist, in other issues, wisely cautioned against situations that can divide women, implying the need for support and comfort. Jan Brosen in June used the



powerful image of the "heart light" of women. I visualized that image as providing light for someone in darkness.

When I think of support I also think of how we perceive it, or more often, don't perceive it. I think of my years of working with rural people, especially women, in the midst of the agonies of the agricultural crisis which hit this country. They expressed, often through tears, how they many times felt "the church has not been there for us."

A friend who had a devastating personal experience that alienated her from her congregational community echoed that anger and hurt. The church had let her down, she felt, deserted her in her time of desperation.

Support means celebrating with one another those times when we feel God's presence—in our struggles and in our joys.

How can this be? How can it be that the people of God who have lovingly and willingly given of their "time, talents and possessions" do not experience the love of God as it comes through the church?

I try to explain to my friend that those of us who have been there for her through these terrible years are also the church. She agrees that we've been there, but she is slower to see, in us, the church. One problem is that so many people equate "the church" with clergy. When support is not forthcoming from that group of individuals, or their action is not perceived as support, many people feel betrayed. Yet, the church is the whole people of God—in the church and in the world.

Support means finding time to talk to one another about how things are going "out there" in our callings. Support means praying together for strength to minister. Support means celebrating with one another those times when we feel God's presence—in our struggles and in our joys.

Who is it that you are supporting right now in their callings? Jot down some real names; then add a note about their situations. Say a prayer for each person as you write.

But there's a big rider to this support question. That's it. You've got it; you have to be as willing to accept support as to give it. And women aren't always very good at accepting support.

Take a moment to think about the supports you in your ministries. In your callings? Who is an expression of the gospel in your life? Are there some people that you have the courage to ask for support? For prayer? For a shoulder to lean on? For money . . . a hug? Again, list specific names. You may want to take time to drop some notes, write a poem, make a phone call, say thanks.

I always find that my list includes one or two angels who touched my life. Sometimes there wasn't even time to write a name. Or when I was wandering in the wilderness, crying out, "I know you're here, God, but where?" God showed me an angel, on a bus or plane, in a supermarket, on the street, in a lunchroom.

See **SUPPORT**, page 10.



ON BEING DEVOTIONAL

SUSAN B. KRASS

check in at the front desk of the Y, several women who attend the exercise-in-rhythm class I do walk the lobby. Some carry babies they leave in the nursery. Others, my age or older, have grown children. Two of my mates are retired.

On our way to class, we talk about our families and other interests. When we arrive, we take off our street clothes, displaying a wide variety of leotards, tights, and figures. For the next hour, we will do 15 or 16 aerobic and stretching exercises aimed at strengthening our muscles, backs and hearts.

When Jo, our instructor, comes in, we find our places on the floor in front of a red wall. She greets us warmly and leads us through some new exercises. She tells us to stop if it hurts. As we go on, if any student has difficulties because of physical problems, Jo modifies the routine for the person so she can continue to participate.

Jo turns on the music and calls out the steps as we do them. There we are—not exactly Olympic material, but listening, learning, moving, and enjoying what we do and the group we're with.

This exercise-in-rhythm approach contrasts sharply to the physical education program required during my freshman year in college. That was a calisthenics class uncoordinated women did not find particularly friendly. Since I was "not athletic," I did only what was required of me. It wasn't until I reached age 50 that I again attempted anything that required complicated movement.

For me there are parallels between these two styles of physical exercise and the two kinds of devotional life I have experienced. One devotional approach is also a kind of spiritual calisthenics—very disciplined and structured. From high school church camp days on, I followed such an approach religiously. I arose early in the morning for reflection

on the daily lectionary readings, prayers, and perhaps a hymn.

With the birth of my first child, all that changed. Michael was born in the June rainy season in Ghana, where we were missionaries. We lived in a house with no electricity and a standpipe for water in the yard outside the detached kitchen. We washed clothes by hand and found we needed to dry at least some of the diapers on cookie sheets in the oven. Michael was a colicky baby, and I was often up at night rocking him. I was very tired.

I remember one day particularly when the early morning sun streamed through the sitting room windows while our little family gathered for morning prayers. I said silently to God: "Thank you for my family and friends. But I don't think I have the energy to say thank you in a formal way any more every day at 7 A.M." Then I asked myself: "Am I being 'less Christian'? Does having children mean that spiritual discipline flies out the window? Will I ever be able to get back into some kind of spiritual routine?"

As the years continue to pass, I have come to realize that I was not being less Christian then or now. For me, now, de-

votional life is not like calisthenics, more like exercise-in-rhythm. Just as a coach advises us to keep at least one foot on the ground at all times, and to breathe when it hurts, so I hear my Divine Instructor modifying the exercise so I can do some or all of the exercise—whatever my abilities and limitations. And the exercise-in-rhythm approach to devotions, it is done to music in the company of others. I like that.

The more I am able to feel the music and move to its beat, the better able I am to do the exercise. And the better able I am to see the others in my company I move.

My current devotional style grew out of my daily life experience and is expressed in the middle of it. I have come to see all of life as a gift from God.

The more I allow myself to be open to life, the more I am able to perceive, contemplate and reflect on God's presence in myself, other people, nature, situations and events. That perceiving, contemplating, and reflecting shows itself in praise and thanksgiving, and prayer for others and myself—not only at set times, but often and many times a day.

While I do need a framework



h to practice this sort of devotional
that framework or structure isn't rig-
s more like an arbor or trellis than
stone wall. For me that framework
rhythm of the church year and the
of nature.

e church year witnesses to the sav-
will of God for humankind and
on—the church year with its sea-
of celebration and penance, its
and fasts, its saints' days. In the
e of the Eucharist, we participate
e life of the one who saves us, as
as in the lives of sisters and brothers
red round the table. We are incor-
ed again into Christ's life, death,
esurrection. And from that table
e sent into the world as bearers of
's love.

e cycle of nature—its seasons fol-
g one another, new life out of
cold ground and seemingly dead
hes—witnesses to this same sav-
ill. As I tend the garden and my
eats the vegetables, as I enjoy the
s and trees, I feel my connected-
with the rest of creation.

me, almost any activity or event
ecome an occasion for devotion:
rsations with my husband or other
friends, quiet times, Bible study,

my younger son's recovery from surgery,
my older son's first play, the first crocus-
es, seed catalogues, births, deaths, fu-
nerals, weddings, reading in the news-
paper about people I have never met,
good fortune, pain, sorrow, or joy of
friends or myself.

What comes together in all this is ap-
propriate for me at this time in my life,
in the setting in which I live. But what is
appropriate for me may not be for you.
Each of us has to explore and discover
her own devotional style. It should be
an exciting search—one that grows out
of religious sensibility, our perception of
the devotional, our personalities, and
our life experience.

The important thing is to hear the mu-
sic and the Instructor—and move!



"RISE UP, O MEN OF GOD"



I realized it again last summer, while visiting a neighboring parish in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. The Scriptures for that Sunday had been reassuring and challenging: one, this passage from Romans concerning prayer: "... but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God" (8:26-27).

The gospel lesson was one of Matthew's seed parables. A portion of the text explained, "He who sows the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world, and the good seed means the sons of the kingdom..." (13:37-38).

I still might not have noticed, had not the choir launched into its anthem, "Rise Up, O Men of God."

Horried, I looked around, wondering if any other women of the congregation felt the knife the choir's words had driven into me. I knew it could not be (and probably was not intended), but the words in the service seemed to imply that God's word is meant only for half the population—a half to which I do not belong.

I suppose I looked most in the congregation that day for women who appeared close to me in age and status—early twenties; single; and either work-

ing or enrolled in school, or both. The church was full. But few even looked like my description. Could it be that my female peers, my sisters closest to me in age and background, have also felt the slight of exclusive language—and have chosen not to come back?

I thought of my own congregation, a city church with a number of women members—where inclusive language was practiced in the reading of Scripture. Even there, some members are saying it is not enough. They are saying that the words spoken from the lectern and the pulpit, written into the hymns, the prayers, and printed on banners and bulletins—in short, all parts of the service—need to reflect that God's grace is for all people, women and men, equally in the eyes of God. And in my congregation, too, young women composed a low percentage of the regular worshippers.

Later, I began to ask my female friends outside of church. Most of them were Christian—many Lutheran—but few were active in any congregation. Some were vague: "I've just never found a church where I'm comfortable."

Others were more specific: "I go to church, but I don't really fit in... the women there are so quiet, so reserved that you hardly notice them."

Still others were indignant: "Church. Where women are called sons of God, where God is a man, and where women are only singled out when they need to be day School teachers or people to be asked for coffee? No thanks!"

My friends' responses revealed



son " Rise up , O men of God

need for much more than inclusive language. True, we need to hear that God's Spirit lives in the hearts of people; that ministry thrives in the children of the kingdom; and that by grace, we may together rise as saints of God. But proclaiming the gospel in words that include all people is only the beginning. Visionaries need to see all people—children, women, men, minorities—included in the life of the church. We need to hear, directly and indirectly, that they belong.

This means being open and supportive to female pastors and seminary students. It means exploring alternative biblical translations and theologies. It means seeking a variety of people to fill a variety of positions—from men as lay church school teachers and altar committee members to women as pastors and council members. It means, on occasion, opening the pulpit to people other than ordained ministers.

The church has more or less kept up with the secular world in accepting women as equals. I realized again this summer that this is not enough. The church must not follow the times in practicing inclusivity; it must be the leader. As long as women—or any members of the body of Christ—are made to feel they are Christians, second-class, we who attend church have far to go in our calling to make disciples of all people.

Elizabeth (Betsy) Burow is a recent graduate of Augsburg College in Minneapolis. She currently works as a technical editor at the ELCA Publishing House in parish resources development.

The Silences of Summer

Mary Magdalene, the saint we celebrate on July 22, is an important figure in Christian history, in large part because of her presence at Jesus' resurrection. But what happened to her after that? Just at the point when the gospel stories about this woman begin to indicate her significance, just when it looked as if her life might be ready for a new plateau or frontier, or as if she might be called to a more challenging ministry, she disappears! What happened to this star among the disciples, this first witness to the resurrection? Where did she go? Why is she never mentioned again in Scripture?

It might seem curious that the church would drop a day into the middle of the spiritually-charged season of Pentecost (flames, wind, spiritual gifts, excitement, pizzazz, emotion) that celebrates someone who disappeared from view at the height of her importance. But perhaps there's a subtle connection to Pentecost, after

all. Indeed, there is a lesson to be learned from this spiritual sister and mother of ours, Mary from Magdala.

The two of us think that lesson has to do with "summer silence," a term we use to describe a spiritual gift which God gives to everyone, but which not everyone takes. A summer silence is a time, however long, when one kind of renewal is made possible by a self-imposed obscurity. A time when quiet becomes more than the absence of noise. A time when small events and special moments can be turned over and over in one's mind. A time when what is precious—truly valuable—gets relearned. A time to listen to God's voice.

Every so often in our years together, we've taken "summer silence" away from church work. These were times we were leading anything; times we were on any committees, times when we let (asked) other folks do what we had been doing. And times when to some



*for Mary Magdalene—and for many of us who
have taken a summer silence—these times are surely
Spirit-given as the times of high energy and
excitement in our ministries.*

ably seemed as though we had disappeared. Sometimes those “summers” were literally three months long, other times a weekend or a few weeks. One of our “summers of silence” lasted a couple of years!

We think that’s what Mary might have done after the resurrection—gone into obscurity for the benefits of a summer silence. Maybe back to Magdala, her hometown, a small town near the Sea of Galilee. Maybe to a family she had left behind for the previous three years. Maybe to a quiet ministry to friends and neighbors. Perhaps even to an exciting, locally well-known life of service. We never quite got noticed down in Jerusalem, where they were making big plans for the new church, and gaining enough notoriety to be persecuted.

We think that, just maybe, Mary didn’t mind the lack of fame. The crowds didn’t lure her anymore. Being well known wasn’t all that important. She didn’t mind leaving behind her leadership roles in the new and growing church. Maybe she just became quiet, and spent her time in her own kind of summer silence.

Perhaps at times you’ve felt a little like Mary Magdalene might have. You may have spent your time in highly visible service to others. You may have been on a committee in your congregation, a part of every community group, a leader or a follower who could always be depended on. An inspired and in-

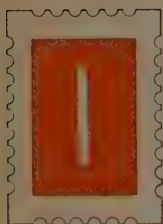
spiring person. And then . . . whoosh! You dropped out of sight, no longer there for some of the people who depended on you. In a while, “Whatever happened to what’s-her-name?” became a kind of plaintive epitaph spoken about you. Folks may have wondered what this summer silence of yours was all about.

For Mary Magdalene—and for any of us who have taken a summer silence—these times are as surely Spirit-given as the times of high energy and excitement in our ministries. God’s power is as surely revealed during our times of obscurity as when we stand visibly tall, are willing to be counted, and make a broad mark on people around us.

In this season of Pentecost—when the Sunday lessons compel us to examine the Christian life—the summer silence of Mary Magdalene could be a welcome example, and an invitation.

A 25¢ Friend

PAULINE JOYCE SHEEHAN



I am a friend by mail. I have always sent sympathy cards, birthday cards, anniversary cards and Christmas letters, but

I wanted to be an even more encouraging friend.

Who needs friendship by mail? Of course the bride and groom, the graduate, and the neighbor recently widowed do. But so does my co-worker whose teenager ran away from home last night. And the woman in my aerobics class whose mother moved to a nursing home.

I mailed a cassette of the Psalms to the mother of the lost son and sent a large, colorful calendar for my friend to give her mother in the nursing home.

Clippings of poems, recipes, puzzles, quotes, articles, and cartoons can be wonderful sources of encouragement. My boss ordered cheese soup at a restaurant. When I ran across a cheese

soup recipe in the newspaper, I mailed it to him.

Educational or promotional brochures, small books and pamphlets can provide just the information a friend needs. I met a woman at a flea market. About a year later, I ran into her at a grocery store. She had just learned that her 15-year-old daughter was pregnant. I asked for the woman's address. Before I unloaded groceries I mailed her a booklet detailing help available for pregnant teenagers.

When a friend turned old enough to vote, I sent her a League of Women Voters pamphlet with her birthday card.

A new family in our church recently moved from across the state. They were discouraged because the husband was unemployed, the teenagers changed schools, and the house deal had fallen through. After going out to coffee with the mother, I came home and mailed her **Good Grief** by Granger E. West (Fortress Press, 1962).

I'm thinking
of you...

and brochures and pamphlets in the
ry, waiting rooms, church foyers,
ernment buildings, and the county
Addresses and toll-free numbers are
lable in the library for lung, heart,
etes, cancer, and many other asso-
ons. These groups will provide in-
ational materials you can share
n the need arises.

evotional and instructional books
be purchased from bookstores or
ered directly from the publisher.
ishers, such as Augsburg/Fortress,
I book lists on request.



ailable gifts say "I
care," and "congrat-
ulations." These in-
clude devotional ma-
terials, cassettes,
bookmarks, stickers,
rings, flower seeds, hair ribbons,
keup samples, jewelry, pressed flow-
or leaves, photos, maps, baseball
ds, a stick of gum, embroidery floss,
velopes of sachet, spice samples,
ldren's drawings, wild-
emed shoelaces. . . .

A note of congratulations and a city
o surprised my baby-sitter when she
her driver's license. A small address
k pleased my high school neighbor
o was accepted into college.

At holiday times, expanding your
usual mailing list can be much appre-
ciated. I mail valentines, pop-up nativity
scenes, and Easter bookmarks to the
four-year-olds in my Sunday school
class. The cost is small compared to
how important a child feels to receive a
letter in the mail.

What kinds of messages do I include
with my mailings? After a crisis in my
own life, I concluded that what my
friends said was not as important as their
thoughts. So I write brief notes that say:
I'm thinking of you. I appreciate your
courage. I'm proud of you. You encour-
age me. When could we meet for
lunch? I'm free Tuesday afternoon to
baby-sit. You deserve your honor.
Thanks for all you are to me. This car-
toon reminded me of you. Missed you
at church; here's the bulletin. I thought
your grandchild would enjoy this.

It takes effort and organization to
"pull off" this friendship by mail, this
mail ministry, but I have found it a won-
derful means to offer support and en-
couragement. While you're thinking of
it, do you know someone who could
use a little something in the mail?

*Pauline Joyce Sheehan, a free-lance
writer from Lake Stevens, WA, is also a
registered nurse who works in cardiac
rehabilitation.*



FREE!

Gifts to give Anyone Anytime!

MARTHA J. BECKMAN

We all know that some of the best gifts are free. Sometimes, however, our idea bank is as strapped as our budget. Consider, then, the useful—and free—gift ideas described below.

SOCIABILITY

You have an elderly aunt living alone in an apartment in town. You know she's lonely, she calls you frequently, and you feel guilty about being so busy you must cut the conversation short. Aunt Katie misses the fresh vegetables she used to grow on the farm. Why not pick her up on your way to the farmers' market next Saturday?

Encouragement

You're one of the "inactive" members of your church. You're so tied up with work you have little time to involve yourself in church activities. But you appreciate the many ministries in your church. How about sending a note of appreciation to your pastor, to the choir director, to the Sunday school superintendent, or to an adult study teacher, praising their work and thanking them for the way it has affected your life?

RECREATION

You'd like to do more with your children; time is your most precious gift to give. You could take your children to a park, a beach, a library, or a museum.

ding even half an hour playing a
with them, or working jigsaw
es and just chatting, is valuable
personal. Share some time, share
erest, share some fun.

DAUGHTER

u read, take note of cute cartoons,
funny children's sayings, and clip
py them. When you visit a friend
hospital, or write friendly letters,
nt to cheer someone working with
share a cartoon—give the gift of a
or chuckle to brighten someone's

PRIVACY

ould be half of a happily married
e, but each of you still needs mo-
to be alone, to do what you want
when you want to do it. Two sib-
sharing a bedroom may need the
privacy. Offering ways to give that
person room and space alone is a
e gift.

ERVICE

is high-priced. We each have
alent that makes our labor spe-
e can give others the gift of baby-
plant watering, snow shoveling,
nowing, housecleaning, dish-
g, letter writing, reading aloud,
g a meal, weeding a garden,

nursing a sick person for a few hours,
rubbing a back, transporting people,
doing laundry, changing screens—any-
thing we can do that someone else
needs done. It's a valuable gift.

*Something
in the mail!*

An unexpected letter, a carefully chosen
greeting card, an invitation, a notice of
something a person would like to know
about—all are gifts of happiness. Quick,
spontaneous, surprise happenings in life
raise our spirits and make us say, "Praise
the Lord!"

LOVE

If you care, show it. A gentle pat, a hug,
a quick kiss, a squeeze of the hand, or
a smile demonstrates your affection. It's
a heart-filling gift.

Prayer

Prayer changes things, and people.
Prayer is conversing with God and ask-
ing for God's love and guidance for our-
selves and others. With God's help, we
can make others' lives fuller. Prayer is
one of the greatest gifts we can give, and
it's FREE.

*Retired from owning and operating a
nursing home for the mentally ill in
Minnesota, writer Martha Beckman is
now a resident of Granada Hills, CA.*

Bible Basis: Mark 10:1-52

■ Sitting on the porch of the mission home on the African coast, Anna looked past the trees, past the distant cemetery, and out to the blue ocean where breakers crashed and dolphins played. She listened distractedly to her children playing in the yard while she thought.

■ She thought back to the day she had decided to leave her family's home in northern Norway and travel to America. After much prayer, she had felt called by God to go there and prepare herself to be a nurse.

■ Anna thought about her graduation from the Deaconess Hospital. She remembered the day she had met a seminarian, Jacob Olson, who was visiting one of her patients. That memory faded into memories of her wedding day, of Jacob's first call, of her first son's birth in the parsonage, and of their decision to follow God's call to be missionaries.

■ The years in Africa were a jumble of more births and children, trips to the bush to preach and teach, bouts of malaria, the joy of seeing many come to Christ.

■ But the grief from which her thou had momentarily freed her now found her again as she recalled the day Jan died of malaria. She remembered his funeral and the difficult last year.

■ Assessing these events in her life, Anna realized that each step of the journey she had tried to follow God's call. What she had encountered had brought her great joy. But following God's call also brought her great heartbreak. She didn't know what I was getting into, she thought. And as she watched her children play in the yard, and between them, her husband's grave, she prayed for courage and faith to go on.

■ In this story, a woman considers her calling to be a disciple of Jesus Christ—as a believer, nurse, a mother, a missionary. She reviews the events in her life and reflects upon what it means to follow God's call.

■ You, too, are a disciple of Jesus Christ. Think back over the events of your life as a disciple. Which ones stand out for you? Assess these events. What has been like for you to follow Christ?

■ Read Mark 10:1-52 or Mark 10:45.



Relationships, Riches, and God's Kingdom

At this point in Mark, Jesus has been in Galilee, his homeland (Mark 9:33).

Read Mark 10:1. Where does Jesus go now? What's the significance of this move?

The first thing that happens in this new territory is that some people question Jesus. Jesus' responses tell us about how we are to be disciples. He addresses not only all, but our intimate relationships.

Read Mark 10:2-9. Why do the Pharisees question Jesus?

3 What things do you notice about their question?

4 In reply to Jesus, the Pharisees quote Moses. (See Deuteronomy 24:1-4.) Why does Jesus say God gave this law?

5 In his response, Jesus quotes two passages from Genesis. (See Genesis 1:27; 2:24). What is Jesus saying about marriage?

6 To be disciples, what does Jesus say our intimate relationships should be like?

7 Read Mark 10:13-16. To be disciples, Jesus says that we must be like children in receiving the kingdom of God. How do you receive the kingdom of God like a child?

8 Now read Mark 10:17-22. Again, Jesus speaks about discipleship. Like the Pharisees, this rich man has a question for Jesus: "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" In response, Jesus cites the law of Moses. The man replies that from his youth he

has followed this law. What does the man's reply tell you about the law (10:20)?

9 In 10:21, underline the verbs and action words. What must the man do to inherit eternal life?

10 Mark says that the man goes away sorrowful because he has many possessions. When you hear Jesus' words in Mark 10:21, how do you respond? How possible is it for you to do as Jesus has instructed?

BIBLE STUDY BIBLE STUDY BIBLE STUDY BIBLE STUDY BIBLE STUDY

Following Jesus

In Mark 10:32-45, Jesus predicts for the third time his death and resurrection. Mark graphically portrays the scene: on the road to Jerusalem, Jesus walks ahead of the disciples and the others, who follow him "amazed" and "afraid." Jesus tells, in detail, the events to come. Underline the verbs or action words in 10:33-34 that tell what will happen to him.

1

How do the disciples respond to his prediction?

2 Jesus says that to follow him we must be able to drink the cup he drinks and be baptized with his baptism. In light of Mark 10:32-34, how would you characterize his cup and baptism?

3 When you were baptized with Jesus' baptism, you were marked with the cross of Christ forever. What difference has it made for you that you have been marked with the cross of Christ? Put another way, if you had never been baptized, how would you be different today?

4 Read Mark 10:42-45. If we are to be disciples of Jesus, what do these verses tell about how we are to relate to one another? What is our motivation?

5 Jesus criticizes the kind of authority that “lord[s] it over” other people (10:42). As disciples, what kind of authority does Jesus say we are to practice? How can you, and your congregation, practice this kind of authority?

A Disciple Sees and Follows

Chapter of Mark concludes with the story of Bartimaeus, the last healing story in Mark.

Read Mark 10:51-52. How does Bartimaeus's response compare with the response of the disciples to Jesus?

In Mark 8 and 9, we have seen that in Mark 10 that being a disciple of Jesus is not easy. It means that we are called to follow the cross of Christ. It means we are called to be servants, and childlike. It means we are called to sell what we have, give to the poor, and follow Jesus. In the face of such demanding discipleship, the immediate response of Bartimaeus to follow Jesus is a wonderful inspiration for us, and as we ponder and try to live the demands of discipleship, there are for us Jesus's words in Mark 10:27, where he says that with people, it is impossible; but with God, all things are possible.

In Closing

Reflect on following Jesus. What gives you joy? What gives you hope and courage?

Worship

Prayer of the Day: Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost

Almighty God, source of every blessing, your generous goodness comes to us anew every day. By the work of your Spirit lead us to acknowledge your goodness, give thanks for your benefits, and serve you in willing obedience; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen (LBW, page 28).

Looking Ahead

To prepare for the next study, "To Be a Living Temple," read Mark 11:1—13:2, and reflect on ways in which your congregation works for justice.

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ABOUT WOMEN

BETTE McCLELLAND

Charlotte Odman

Charlotte Odman, like many American women, spent a few years during World War II working at an arsenal. Odman does not remember those arsenal years with much relish; in fact she hated them. "I always jokingly said I would even work for the church [to get away from the arsenal] after the war, though it was the lowest paying job in town."

She soon got her wish when E. E. Ryden, editor of the **Lutheran Companion** (the Augustana Synod's equivalent of **The Lutheran**), asked her to be an editorial assistant for the magazine. Soon she was writing occasional articles.

E. E. Ryden "was the kind of person who encouraged people to do things. 'Try it and see what you can do,' he'd say." Odman interviewed Martin Niemöller, outstanding Lutheran pastor in Germany during World War II, and his wife for the magazine. Before long she became assistant editor of the **Companion**. She also wrote a number of articles and programs for the women's organization of the Augustana church.

Odman has seen three church mergers in her life. As a result of one, she lost her position on the **Lutheran Companion**; but the next one propelled her to

Philadelphia, where she became the editor of two popular devotional booklets, **The Home Altar** and **The Word in Season**, for the Board of Publication of the Lutheran Church in America.

She delighted in the letters she received from readers. One man found a copy of her booklet in a ditch and wrote her that reading it had changed his life.

Work has never been the whole of Odman's life. Philadelphia she took up volunteer work at a near hospital. The

she met students who needed housing and one after the other she took them under her generous wing.

In 1982—already past retirement age—Odman decided it was time to step down. But stepping down did not mean slowing down. She serves on the board of the American Swedish Historical Museum and the women's board of the Medical College of Pennsylvania. She was historian for her local church's centennial celebration last year. And she continues to volunteer at the hospital where one of her favorite tasks is rocking babies and feeding them. In typical offhand fashion Odman says, "It is forever for those sick babies to feed them; the nurses have so many other important things to do."



Margaret Bodnar

Margaret Bodnar grew up in a Hungarian-speaking congregation—the Hungarian Lutheran Church of Haddonfield, Penn.—which is no longer in existence. When Bodnar was 12 years

her father had an old piano and gave her a year of lessons. It was an opportunity which the young girl turned into a gift for the church. At a time when there was no organist, Bodnar used what musical knowledge she had to help the people sing by

ly playing the hymn tunes as best she could.

When there came a time when there was no pastor at First. It was a small church, with only 100 members and an even smaller Sunday school. Over and over again lay members had to fill in. Bodnar was in her early 20s at the time. She handled some of the readings herself and gathered other members to do the other pastoral work. Her mother says that it was young Margaret who kept them all together during those days.

Bodnar is performing similar feats today at her current parish, Immanuel Lutheran Church in East Lansdowne, Pa., a small congregation that like many has experienced long periods without a pastor, where members regu-

larly handle the reading and preaching.

Immanuel's women's group would hardly exist without Bodnar. She has been a part of it for many years, serving as president for a while. Ten years ago

when she finally decided to step down from a leadership role, no one else was able to take over, so she "filled in" again.

Little gets past Bodnar's sharp eye. If there is a job that needs doing, she tends to do it herself, or finds someone else to do it.

The mother of four boys and a girl, she is quick to give her husband credit for supporting her through all the many years she has devoted to church work. Laughingly she notes that every time they moved, he would find them a home that was "just down the street from a church." Not a churchgoer himself, he has nevertheless left his craftsman's mark in the woodworking and painting jobs he has repeatedly done for the congregations.

Bodnar has also worked outside the home for most of her years. She tried retirement for a short while recently, but is now back clerking in a store. She feels that she has a ministry in this capacity, too, and wants to make sure that customers who deal with her will go away smiling because she cared about them.



Edwina Edwards

When Edwina Edwards was approached to be interviewed for "About Women," she could not understand why anyone would want to write about her. So she brought a friend to dinner, hoping to convince the writer to feature the friend instead. As Edwards talked, it became clearer why she was puzzled about being selected for a profile. She said life had just "fallen into place" for her. She'd only done what came naturally to her.

For instance, her mother-in-law had urged her to take her children to Sunday school in Philadelphia, where she lived. And she did so. While she was there, she was asked to teach. And she did so—first fourth graders, then later adults. All the while she did just what she has always done—made people around her feel comfortable, valuing them and their ideas.

Soon she was asked to join the Lutheran Church Women group. And she did so, taking part in all of its activities.

But Edwards also helps things happen—just by who she is. She and her friend Cynthia wanted to attend the last convention of Lutheran Church Women, in Chicago. But where could they possibly find the money to do so? They

had all but decided it was impossible when they stopped short and asked themselves where their faith was.

They determined to talk about the goal to everyone they knew. Both are so full of enthusiasm and good spirit that whenever they told their friends and co-workers about their endeavor, they were given a dollar or two to help them on their way. Soon they found themselves with enough money to make the trip.



train. And they did so.

Edwards also made another special trip: she was selected to be one of 20 Lutheran Church Women who in 1980 took part in an international exchange to several Soviet bloc countries. Her photographs helped illustrate some of the "Sisters in Christ" articles on that trip in the first issues of **LWT**.)

Edwards' open spirit has brought her friendships with all kinds of people, all ages and religious (and nonreligious) backgrounds.

Says her friend Cynthia: "Edwina's person says to others, 'I care about you. I want to listen. You're special.'"

Bette McClelland, East Lansdowne, Pa., formerly worked for Lutheran Church Women. She is currently attending Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia.



PORT
continued from page 8

voice on the other end of my telephone.

AFFIRMATION


affirmation can be part of support, and an ongoing process—for good times and bad. It means saying something like, "You have the gift of parenting. I see it clearly as you help your son reach milestones without telling him what to

affirmation should include specific examples of ways in which you see the other person using that gift. Examples make it authentic. Plan to give yourself genuine affirmation as well. Reread the Getz's article on "Self-talk" in the *Lutheran Woman Today* for some fresh thoughts on affirmation. We are called and empowered to do

the work of God for which our gifts equip us. It's no accident that we are all different. There are different jobs to be done in God's world. And for all our inadequacies, we're all God's got to do that work in the world.

EMPOWERED

Empowered. What an awesome word! We say we are empowered by the Holy Spirit. But that isn't the only usage for the word. We can, and do, empower one another. When I help you achieve your full potential as a called child of God, when you help me achieve mine, we multiply the possibilities and opportunities to be God's powerful people where we are—always connected, interdependent and supported in our callings.



FAMILY CRISIS

SUE EDISON-SWIFT

Reprinted with permission from *Family and Home Office Computing*, December 1986.

This story began last fall [1985] when our pediatrician found a lump in our daughter's abdomen. Four days and many tests later, we were given a diagnosis: Annie had neuroblastoma, a huge, inoperable, malignant mass.

Many people had the right to know

this news. How do you tell family and friends that beautiful, 4½ year-old Annie would probably not live to see her sixth birthday? Repeating this news over and over on the telephone was not possible, and to ask someone else to make these calls was not fair. Since we have a computer system, we had another option. We chose to write a letter:

September 28, 1985

There is no way to say this easily. Annie has neuroblastoma, a large cancerous mass in the abdomen that has spread to bone marrow. Neuroblastoma is considered a terminal illness, treated but not cured with chemotherapy. Statistically, children with this kind of cancer are likely to survive less than two years.

We know you are devastated. We know that you care. For awhile though, please don't call us. We are hanging on by threads and would find phone calls draining, not supporting. We are good delegating and believe us when we say we'll contact you "if there is anything you can do." In the meantime, two kind neighbors have been elected to take calls. They have the latest information, and you should feel free to call them.

My husband, Paul, the computer enthusiast of the family, keeps an electronic address book using a data-base manager. Because this list is current, it was an easy task to select the people to receive the letter and print out address labels. In two hours, we had written, photocopied, stuffed, stamped, and applied labels to about 100 letters.

People complain about computer letters, but our family and friends were unanimously grateful to receive the news quickly—firsthand from us. The 100 letters generated an active support group of more than 1,000 people. Family, friends, and friends of friends sent

cards and letters, mailed treasures to Annie, prayed for all of us, and did countless good works and kind deeds.

Happily, we had reason to mail a second letter seven days after the first. Annie's diagnosis had been made on the basis of several tests: the most important one was a bone-marrow biopsy. A hospital pathologist reviewed the biopsy slides and caught a slight inconsistency. As a result, an abdominal biopsy was ordered. Miraculously, the abdominal biopsy showed benign cells instead of neuroblastoma. It was unlikely, but suddenly there was a *chance* that Annie's tumor was not cancerous.

October 4, 1985

If the last letter we mailed you could have been entitled "despair," this letter can be called "hope." It seems there is a CHANCE that Annie has ganglioneuroma--the benign--not cancerous--mature form of neuroblastoma.

Surgery is scheduled for Wednesday morning, and the surgeon will try to remove as much of the massive tumor as he can. If the entire tumor is ganglioneuroma, Annie is CURED, and I can go back to worrying about the things most mothers worry about. If underneath this benign form of the tumor there is still neuroblastoma, then the prognosis is still bleak.

We are OK, in need of sleep, in need of more good news. Annie is a gift from God and is caring for us all. In the hospital playroom, she gives out her stickers to cheer up the other kids. "Don't worry," she told my friend Sibba. "I'll be all right." She gets scared and she cries, but she holds still and does what needs to be done.

The next time I write, I hope it can be titled "JOY."

Everyone on our mailing list liked the third letter best. Annie's football-size tumor was successfully removed and it was benign! It had been tricky, delicate surgery. It was a medical miracle. Our Annie was going to heal, and she was going to be all better.

October 14, 1985

JOY!

We have a miracle to report. On Wednesday, October 9, Annie's surgeon removed a football-sized tumor from Annie's abdomen. He was able to remove 95 percent of the tumor which was all around, but did not invade, every artery and organ in her abdomen (except the intestines). On Friday, the lab study proved that the entire tumor consisted of ganglioneuroma cells--the benign--cancerous--form of neuroblastoma. This means Annie will be fine; she is CURED. No further treatment is needed.

The next letter mailed was a combination progress report, thank-you note, and holiday greeting. A letter timed for Thanksgiving seemed appropriate, for if any family had reason to be thankful, it was ours. Annie had healed quickly.

There were still worries. Annie's blood pressure had been elevated since her surgery, and her left kidney wasn't functioning at full capacity. We hoped both problems would resolve themselves with time.

Soon after Thanksgiving, it was clear that time was not helping. Annie would need a nephrectomy--her left kidney would have to be removed.

This time the surgery would be simpler and the prognosis clearer. Annie could easily manage with one kidney.

We knew what to expect from surgery and it wasn't anything fun. Annie turned to the hospital, and I returned to the computer, activating our support group once again (see letter, top of page 33).

On December 19, we mailed our final letter. Annie's surgery went well, her blood pressure was normal, and she was recovering on schedule. My girl had spent weeks in the hospital and had two major operations in the last months. She was fine, and we were all happy.

You see how our computer help deliver very personal messages. Our data base of addresses was used to choose the families that would receive the letters, generate mailing labels, and create a list of phone numbers to call.

December 5, 1985

Dear friends, once again we are asking for your help. Please pray that we be given the strength and courage to get through this. Please write us. Letters are concrete evidence of our concern, and they mean so much. Sending Annie "a little something" is always appreciated. Last time, the treasures she received did so much to lift her spirits and keep her occupied.

hospital, and even keep track of gifts and kindnesses. Our word processor, spell checker, and grammar checker helped get the letters out. All of these things could have been done without a computer, but with it, the task was easier and faster. When managing a crisis, minimal stress and maximum speed are important.

Using the computer to write about Annie's progress had another, less obvious, benefit. Because we were essentially writing form letters, we could contact more people. Think of the important people in your life that you

see or write to only occasionally. These were the people especially touched when we included them. In fact, some of the most comforting letters and greatest help came from people on the periphery of our lives. We wouldn't have had the time or strength to contact so many people any other way. A mass mailing allowed more people to be involved, to help, and to show they cared.

The close of our Thanksgiving letter still rings true:

Thanksgiving, 1985

We are fine, the three of us. We learn from Annie how to put some of this experience behind us and some of it ahead of us. Instead of counting blessings we will try to use them. And we will always remember how the love of God, our love for each other, and the love from all of you, saved us.

Editor's note: Annie is now a tall and healthy almost-second-grader. See the next page for her mother's reflections on the experience two and a half years later.

When Annie's prognosis was grim, I did not ask "Why me?"

It was only after we realized that Annie would be fine, that a miracle had occurred, did I ask "Why me?" Why was our family so blessed? Because of this experience with Annie, I feel a special connection to the portion of the Women of the ELCA mission statement, "support one another in our callings."

I have come to answer my "why me" question in terms of a calling: I feel called to share Annie's story, to help others in times of crisis, and to rejoice in and praise my Lord of mercy.

Because of Annie's dire illness and suffering, it was the worst of times. Because of the extraordinary support Annie, Paul and I received, it was also the best of times. When I had no hope, I prayed for strength. God gave me enough strength to ask others for help. What a response! What support!

Support came from prayers. "I will pray for Annie's cure every time I nurse my baby," wrote one friend, "and I'm going to ask for nothing short of a total cure." Our greatest support came from knowing that many congregations, prayer groups and individuals were petitioning God on Annie's behalf. Others could voice in prayer those words which we, in our despair, dared not mouth.



Support came from letters. Letters are unobtrusive support; you can open and read them when the time is right. Letters are tangible support; you can hold them in your hand and feel the touch they represent. Letters are a lasting support; they can be read and reread for sustained comfort. I especially cherish a letter from a woman in our church who, when everything looked hopeless, wrote, "There is a paradox—when we feel helpless and weak, God does indeed make us strong. We dare to start truly experiencing the power of love, the power of prayer. We can ask for our faith to be stronger than our fear. We can ask for the wisdom to distinguish denial from determination." In a letter without pat answers, this woman helped us find a realistic hope in God.

Support from kindnesses. In our case, support came from those who took phone calls, brought meals, and sent gifts and cards to Annie. For others, baby-sitting, housekeeping, transporting, keeping company and countless other kindnesses have been offered in Christian love.

When reflecting on the statement "support one another in our callings," I think of those special people who have been "called to support." These are the people who mail the card, send the casserole, offer to baby-sit, or hold your hand at just the right time.

Thank you, Lord, for all those you have called into your service, and especially for those who have been called to translate your love in practical, everyday ways. Help us support one another in our callings, and appreciate those who have been called to support.—SES

A Partnership for Health

Have you ever received a medical explanation that you didn't understand? Or leaving the doctor's office have you ever been unsure about what kind of care you were to give yourself? Or how soon you might expect relief from prescribed medication? Or what side effects there might be?

To help answer such questions you need to develop a mind-set and prepare yourself—not only for when you are sick, but more important, for when you are well. Resources are now available to help you plan a course of action not only for *maintaining* but also for *im-*

proving your health. And basic to any such plan is establishing a partnership with your doctor or health professional.

The first step toward such a partnership is to know your own role. You have an important stake in your health and your doctor, nurse, dentist, chiropractor or other health-care professional is there to assist you in your health concerns.

God has blessed us with finely tuned bodies. With such a gift comes the responsibility to maintain your health to the best of your ability.

You can begin by following the seven golden rules of good health:

THE 7 GOLDEN RULES OF GOOD HEALTH

Get 7-8 hours of sleep

Eat breakfast

Eat three balanced meals per day (without snacking in between)

Maintain your ideal weight

Get regular vigorous exercise

Don't smoke

Abstain from drugs; or be only a moderate drinker of alcohol.

The next step is to keep a personal health record. Such a record would include items related to your family and personal history (that is, blood type, height, weight, blood pressure, pulse, basal temperature, blood cholesterol level, illnesses, surgical history, immunizations, and medical tests or procedures). This record will help you become more aware of your own health status and help you improve it. It can also remind you of any risk factors that are present in your family or person, and can be a useful tool in diagnosing and correcting problems. If appropriate, keep a record for your children and spouse. Update it periodically.

Next, develop your health partnership by reading. Keep informed about things that affect you. You might establish a home health library, and subscribe to selfcare and/or other health periodicals.

A good one to consider is: **Me SelfCare Magazine**, P.O. Box 1000 Reyes, CA, 94956. Make regular visits to your public library to read about the latest health news and tips.

You also need to listen to your body. Learn about signals such as fatigue, insomnia, headache, sore throat, runny nose, irritability, sensitivity to unpleasant smells, and fumes. Also be attuned to symptoms of workaholicism. People in the church, professional workers and volunteers alike—can be especially vulnerable to this. Remember that God wants to keep our life, and our health, in balance. [Look for an article in the October 1988 **LWT** on workaholicism and prayer in the church.—Ed.]

If you find a problem, start doing detective work. One easy method is called "S.O.A.P." It is described in **Selfcare/Wellcare** (Augsburg, 1985).

S.O.A.P.

Subjective Write down the facts; the who, what, when, and where of your problem.

Objective Record the things you can measure: temperature, pulse and other observations.

Assessment Check your findings with a selfcare book.

Plan Start a treatment plan and decide if you need help from a health-care professional.

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tnership with a
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dical history, as
ll as your home
d work envi-
nments. The
al physician

ould not only treat you but teach you.
call that *doctor* comes from *docteur*,
French word for "teacher."

As you seek to establish this relation-
p, you may find that the clinical of-
e you attend reflects much about the
alth professional's attitude toward the
ents. Bulletin boards that highlight
rent health education articles and a
ing-room library are signals to you
t the doctors and staff recognize the
ortance of having clients develop a
d knowledge base about health.

Here are some guidelines for you:

Prior to the visit with your physician:

- Know why you are going to the doctor.

- List the symptoms you are experi-
ing.

- Be aware of complicating factors in
ir own experience.

- Make sure you know what medi-
ons, if any, you are now taking.

During the visit consider the follow-

- If you are the one who is sick, take
ing a friend, spouse, family member.

- Remember that an extra pair of eyes and
s can make an important difference.

- Ask questions about the diagnosis
en.

- Find out about preventive meas-
s.

**God has blessed
us with finely
tuned physical
bodies and with
such a gift comes
the responsibility
to maintain your
health to the best
of your ability.**

- Is what you
have contagious?

- Will a medi-
cation be pre-
scribed?

- What kind?
Are there side ef-
fects?

After your visit
consider these
points:

- Do you feel
comfortable with
the amount of
knowledge you
have?

- Do you know what to do when
you get home?

- What are the provisions for follow-
up?

- Has your physician informed you
what to expect from your illness or in-
jury?

Above all, be thankful for the health
you have. It is indeed a precious gift
from God, as is the thankful heart that
recognizes the gift. Think of the tenth
leper, who was not only healed, but
made whole because he returned to
give thanks (Luke 17:11-19).

A partnership for health means that
you can help make a difference in pre-
serving your gift of health so that it might
last a lifetime.



Growing Up With Day Care

JUDY LYNN HEDBERG

"Sensible and respectable women do not want to work," Grover Cleveland said in 1905. Little would he realize that families today have become partly or solely dependent on a mother's earnings. The Bureau of Labor Statistics analysis of data from monthly Current Population Surveys found that almost 51 percent of women with children under three years of age were in the labor force as of March, 1986.

In earlier days, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins could be counted on to help parents by providing encouragement, models, advice, sympathy in time of trouble, as well as direct care. But more and more family members either live too far away or are employed themselves. Parents must now find others to care for their children.

Today family day-care mothers are caring for an estimated 5.2 million children—nearly half of all children in day care. What is a typical family day-care home like? Who are day-care mothers? What are children's experiences in family day-care homes?

The National Day Care Home Study has produced some answers to these questions after four years of research. This is a sampling of 783 family day-care homes in Philadelphia, San Antonio, and Los Angeles.

According to the study, most day-care mothers are married and have a high school diploma, but not a college degree. Their average length of experience is three years; if a mother has been in the business for more than a year, she'll likely stay in the business.

care-givers generally like their job. Trained observers reported that on average, day-care mothers spend about half of the day interacting with the children; one-sixth supervising or preparing for children; and only a third in household chores, television or other recreational activities.

The amount of teaching and learning going on in the homes in our study suggests that previous descriptions of family day care as lacking in stimulation for young children, "not valid," they reported.

A significant finding was that training day-care mothers makes a difference in the kind of experiences children have in fam-

ily day care. Mothers with training engaged in more teaching and helping and spent less time merely supervising chil-

dren. As researchers point out, however, very few day-care mothers receive training. Those that do usually are in homes that are part of a network or program operated by an agency, school or corporation, such as KinderCare Learning Centers, Inc., of Montgomery, Alabama, with 660 centers and La Petite Academy, operated by CenCor, Inc., of Dallas City, with 250 centers in 16 states.

Such facilities charge between \$30-50 weekly per child, depending on the hours and type of care required. They enroll children to homes in their network,

issue guidelines for toys and equipment, assume licensing responsibilities and provide training and technical assistance to day-care mothers. However, these regulated homes care for only about 2 percent of all children in family day care. Independently regulated

homes account for 4 percent, and unregulated homes for 94 percent.

Among the study's other findings: 1) children usually spend two or more years in the same home and 2) family day-care mothers rank among the poorest paid workers in United States.

Day-care programs make a great demand upon their staff's physical and emotional ener-

gies. The low salaries and nonexistent benefits which most child-care workers endure means that many well-trained and otherwise dedicated care-givers cannot afford to work in the field.

So how do you find good child care? In your telephone book you may or may not find an informational day-care listing. One exception to this unhappy, but all-too-frequent situation is in San Francisco, where parents will find a listing for Child Care Switchboard, an organization which began in 1973 as a parents' collective. Today it has mushroomed into a service with 20 professional workers.

A single call provides information about licensed homes and centers; family day-care homes; day care for hand-





icapped children; costs; number of openings; length of waiting lists and information on other family services.

A three-year-old study funded by the Administration for Children, Youth and Families and the Ford Foundation found approximately 6,400 organizations nationwide that offer child-care information, but only 50 to 60 whose primary function, like that of Child Care Switchboard, is helping parents find good day care.

Unless you have such a referral service, choose a facility and try to take a morning off to visit it. Be there when it opens and stay until after snack time. Ask about the daily routine, fees, what's required of parents, group size, and observe how children interact with adults and each other. Trust your instincts. If something bothers you about the staff or facility, move on to another.

In reaction to widespread reports of sexual abuse, as in the McMartin preschool case in Manhattan Beach, near Los Angeles, parents and educators alike have demanded protection of day-

care children. Thus, Public Law 90-4 provides that any state receiving an allotment shall, as of 1985, make employment history and background checks of operators and staff at the state, county and local level for prior child sexual abuse convictions.

Most states by law now require licensing of day-care centers including health requirements, safety codes and fire inspections. Some cities and counties have additional licensing requirements. Training of child-care center workers is overseen by state licensing which usually requires some college training in child development.

Relations between family and child care are only beginning to be searched and understood. Home care has been complicated by a tapestry of conflicting opinions regarding mother's absence from the home. However, research has now shown that it's the inadequacy of some care that can be harmful to the child, rather than separation itself.

Sandra Scarr, developmental p

ogist and chairperson of the Unity of Virginia's psychology department, says, "Babies thrive with good care, just as they do at home with attentive mother." Scarr says that employed mothers suffer unnecessary "guilt trips," even though they spend as much time in direct interaction with their babies as full-time mothers. In

book, **Mother**

Other Care

Turner Books

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says: "Children

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ssful transition.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics esti-

tes there are at least 19,000 day-care

centers nationwide and that parents pay

\$5 billion annually for them. This fig-

ure will skyrocket to \$35 billion by

2000. "Society has ignored the need to

provide services that fill the gaps caused

by new family structures," says Ronald

Levant, head of the Family Development Project at Boston University.

A crucial consideration is whether we're willing to pay for child-care programs that are far more than custodial. To do so would require a long-term commitment to the recruitment and training of people to staff these centers and a commitment of funds to support them.

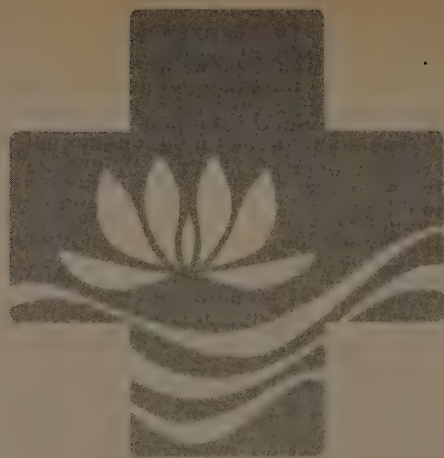


**"Children need the
care of a trusted,
responsive adult, but
whether it's a
biological mother is
not important!"**

The family day-care program is just one of many social institutions affecting many people's lives. Community-action agencies, hospitals, health clinics, social services, churches, schools and recreational programs all influence society. With community effort, state and federal funding, and the experience of those already in the child-care field, we can turn the stumbling blocks of the past into the stepping stones of the future.

For information on your state's day-care regulations, contact your

state licensing division in your health/social service department. Also write for: "A Parent's Guide to Day Care," #017-091-00231-2, Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20403.



This month Lutheran Women Today continues with introductions of the Women of the ELCA staff at the churchwide offices in Chicago. Profiled here is the Mission: Community team of Bonnie Belasic, Kwang-Ja Yu, Marlene Narbert, and Inez Schwarzkopf, as well as Jennifer Weiss, new member of the Mission: Action team featured in the May LWT.—Ed.

Bonnie Belasic loves stories—reading them, hearing them, telling them. It is not surprising, then, that Belasic is so enthusiastic about her position as Director of Communications/Stewardship Interpretation. She sees much of her work as being focused on learning and sharing the stories of the Women of the ELCA and the work they do.

Born in Racine, Wisconsin into a "churchy" family, Belasic trained as a deaconess at Valparaiso University in Valparaiso, Indiana.

As a deaconess, her work included

urban, suburban, rural, multi-family housing, and cross-cultural ministries in five states. Most recently she worked on hospital community relations in Kansas City, Missouri.

"I believe you have to use God's gifts where they fit," Belasic says. "The ministry has a lot to do with discerning the gifts of others and helping identify ways in which individuals and groups might activate their gifts on behalf of others."

An example of this ministry is the Fountain of Hope Lutheran Fellowship, a then-American Lutheran Church mission congregation of 30 members that she helped establish. She says, "This is truly a congregation blessed around gifts. Their food pantry, prayer ministry and dance ministry all emerge from the identified gifts of the members. It's a tremendously affirming combination and example!"

Belasic is a single parent to her 10-year-old daughter Janie, adopted in January. Together they share a church ministry. "My alter-ego is named Apple," Belasic explains, "and she joins me as Apple Too."

Jennifer Weiss, assistant to the Mission: Action team of the Women of the ELCA, is a young woman who has recognized her gifts and is

finding ways in which they might fit in God's service.

"I've always been conscious of social justice issues," Weiss explains, "though some family and friends might I'd 'outgrow' that interest. But I really enjoy helping. And in my desire to make the world better I remain optimistic that things can change."

Her social consciousness has led her to student teach on a Navajo Indian reservation, volunteer for six summers at a muscular dystrophy camp, work for the Coalition for Disabled Citizens, and at the Peace Museum in Chicago. Staff Metro-Help, a telephone crisis line.

"Spirituality is so important to me," she says. "There is such a cooperative here [with the Women of the ELCA]. I like how we all welcome each other, and recognize the benefit of sharing our stories and goals."

Weiss sees the next few years as ones of focus. "There are so many needs. I want to find where I might be of best use. One thing I know for sure: As long as the world is so far from ideal, I'll be looking for change."

A movie buff and avid reader, she plans to write a screenplay someday: to be a comedy about the growing up and growing together of two sisters. Coming from a family with 10 children, she has had ample opportunity to observe the comedic elements of family life firsthand.

A

ssistant to the Action: Community team Marlene Narbert is beginning the process of recognizing her gifts. "I don't have much of a story," she says, "I've just been busy caring for my family and raising my three boys." JUST! After some prodding, Narbert admits that she offers a gift of organization and commitment to her new work with the Women of the ELCA.

Narbert shyly suggests that she's had a calling that has led her to this position. After her boys were older, she returned to part-time office work. One day instead of walking by Mayfair Lutheran Church in Chicago, she walked in and was hired for a position in the office.

"The day after I began work at the church, my mother became seriously ill and was hospitalized," Narbert recalls. "Five months later she passed away. My father died the following month."

"The pastor, congregation, and staff at Mayfair literally came to my rescue. These people saw me through the day. I kept feeling 'God is here.' These people hardly knew me, but they surrounded me with love. I knew I was meant to be there."

"Pastor Kwang-Ja Yu [pronounced Kwansa Yu] came to Mayfair Lutheran Church about the same time I did. We seemed connected. She listened to me and was such a help. When Kwang-Ja said she was leaving to take a new position with the Women of the ELCA, I felt a deep loss."

It was Pastor Yu who saw an opportunity to use Narbert's gifts at the churchwide office. "Even though I wasn't sure about working full-time, I applied, thinking, I'm not going to worry about it. If I'm meant to be there it will all work out."

Marlene Narbert and her husband,



Jennifer Weiss



Kwang-Ja Yu



Inez Schwarzkopf



Marlene Narbert



Bonnie Belasic

are family-centered. Their three Bill (15), Robert (12), and Bryan—with all their activities—keep both very busy.

Director for Ecumenical and Cross-Cultural Programming, the Rev. Kwang-Ja Yu left parish ministry to accept her new worldwide position because she sees all the unknown, common women. The women of faith. The bone of the church. I want to know share their stories. They take what have and make a difference."

Korean woman born in China, Yu's firsthand of the sacrifices of discipleship. "My father was a school principal in China and an important figure in the Christian underground. When I was six, my parents had to decide whether to renounce their faith in China. They left everything and moved to South Korea—with seven children and two suitcases."

Like that of her parents, Yu's story is one of discipleship. "Education is so important, but I was so stubborn I thought it was everything. I earned a master's degree in psychology and did special education in Japan. I thought I'd marry a rich man and have a well-organized, controlled life."

Her life changed dramatically when, as a graduate student, she visited family members over a Christmas holiday. A gas heater in her room literally blew out. "I remember thinking 'God help me,'" she says.

Miraculously, Yu found herself outside the burning building. The burns suffered kept her in the hospital for a month. "I lost interest in my life for my well-controlled life. I asked for a novel; a pastor brought me a Bible instead."

This pivotal event helped her hear the call which led her to ordination—the first woman of color to be ordained by the American Lutheran Church.

God's plan for Kwang-Ja Yu was not clear all at once. "I came to the United States with a vague notion that I would study. By coincidence, I lived with a Lutheran pastor and his family in California. He encouraged me to enter Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota.

"I wrote to my mother about my fears. I was older than the other students. Did I really have a call to be a pastor?"

"My mother wrote back that Moses was an old man when he began his ministry. It took 40 years in the wilderness to humble Moses, and, as stubborn as I was, it would take time for me to hear and accept God's will. Then she wrote a line that is written on my heart. 'With God all things are possible. Why do you doubt?'"

God's plan for Kwang-Ja Yu seems to be coming together. During their internships and first calls, she and her husband, the Rev. Dana Nissen, worked in different cities. Now together in Chicago, Nissen serves at Trinity Lutheran Church and Yu with Women of the ELCA. Their family includes Dietrich, their two-year-old, adopted when he was three and one-half months old.

Irene Schwarzkopf, Director for Community/Organization Development, is a woman of many gifts, not the least of which is her ability to draw a group together in prayer. "I come from a family of powerful prayers," explains Schwarzkopf. "After supper my father, a Norwegian Lutheran minister and seminary professor, would lead

devotions. He used the ending prayer not only to communicate to God, but also with his daughters."

Schwarzkopf heard a call when she was offered her position with Women of the ELCA. Still, it was not an easy decision to listen to that call. "My husband, Lyall, has long been active in state and local politics. He has been the Minneapolis city coordinator for 10 years. Accepting this position meant giving up, or loosening up, many things important to me."

Schwarzkopf commutes home to Minneapolis on weekends. "I love my home. I love being at home. As I wound down my work with the American Lutheran Church Women [most recently as Director for Education], I planned a winter writing at home. There were several pieces of fiction awaiting my attention."

"I've had to pull back from many of my regional volunteer commitments. I

have strong ties to my church community. Sometimes it is especially painful to be apart from them."

But Schwarzkopf is quick to point out the many positive aspects of her new work. "I love working for the church, even, at times, when it's discouraging. It is such an unusual privilege to be part of a beginning—something new. And I like the women. Women are dedicated, so spiritual, so fun. It's exciting to help build a community of women."

"And what makes us a community? What we have in *common*. We are created, redeemed, and empowered as children of God. We express our community through our relationships. We build community by recognizing and sharing our gifts."

Schwarzkopf and her husband have four children: Erik (27), Kurt (26), David (22) and Ilse (17).

Sue Edison-S



Brief Prayers On News Items

SONIA GROENEWOLD

Apartheid continues take life and freedom

"When will this killing stop?" asked
Eran Bishop Kleopas Dumeni of
Namibia, after this winter's bomb blast,
which killed 27 people and injured 70
others at Oshakati, the northernmost
corner of South Africa's occupation
territory in his country. Dumeni's
daughter Anna was one of those killed.
The struggle to abolish apartheid
continues both in Namibia and South
Africa. Many people are living in fear.

*Lord: many have been killed,
and many are being detained
under the system of apartheid.
Sustain those who fight for life
and dignity, and let us not be
content until change is
effected.*

Civil war in Central America

Refugees in Central American
countries live in fear as civil war rages.
Death threats against prominent
church leaders continue, and the
government is exerting controls over
churches and institutions aiding
refugees, who now number 1.5
million.

*Lord, give strength to those
who live in war-torn
countries. Help peace come
to Central America.*

ELCA youths struggle with today's issues

Twenty-one thousand young people
will come together for the first Evangel-
ical Lutheran Church in America
National Youth Gathering in San
Antonio, July 31-August 4. At the
Gathering they will discuss such issues
as chemical dependence, death and
dying, South Africa, peer pressure,
sexuality and world peace.

*Lord, the Gathering's theme is
"Rejoice in the Lord Always."
Let it truly be the theme in
each of the young people's
hearts as they return home to
meet daily life and its issues.*

Bible translations show large increase

Parts of the Bible now can be read in
1,884 languages. That represents 36
more language groups than had trans-
lations in 1986—still less than 40
percent of the approximately 5,000
languages in the world.

*Let us not take your Word for
granted, Lord. Through it,
people come to know and
believe in you.*

Sonia Groenewold is news editor of
The Lutheran.

OFFERING MEDITATION

Prayer (by Leader) Lord Jesus, we confess you are the Christ, the Son of the living God, just as Peter confessed, in his own way, at Caesarea Philippi. Just as Martha did, in her way, after the death of Lazarus. Along with the rest of the Christian community, we, your disciples, confess our faith in you, and in the rest of the Godhead—the Creator God and the Sustaining Spirit. Hear us now, as together we speak to you and to one another.

Reader 1 O God, as a community of women, part of your faithful believing church, you call us to love each other and to support one another in our callings.

Group We accept that call in thankfulness and joy.

Reader 2 O God, daily you put before us opportunities for love, service and worship. Situations where we can see you in the other person. Where we can speak an affirming word. Where we can give a “free gift” to those around us. Where we can take some moments for devotion to you. Where we can be the church to one another.

Group Let us seize those opportunities in thankfulness and joy.

Reader 3 O God, we are your people—the whole people of God, in the church and in the world. What a marvelous and awesome calling you have blessed us with.

Group We accept that call in thankfulness and joy.

Reader 4 For all your faith in us, and for your transforming love that shapes us into a caring, compassionate community, we rejoice and give thanks. Be with us now—as we place before you the gift of ourselves and the gift of our monies. Receive your hand of blessing on these offerings, as they go to help important ministries happen among and for women. Ministries that . . .

Group Bring us Bible studies, programs, resources, and a monthly magazine.

Reader 4 Ministries that . . .

Group Empower women through scholarships, grants, a literacy program, leadership training, and advocacy for those whose voices are seldom heard.

Reader 4 Ministries that . . .

Group Design intercultural exchanges and foster community among all women of the ELCA.

Reader 5 Lord God, you not only give us gifts to use in our callings, but also thankful hearts that return these gifts to you. Shape us as your grateful people, ever ready to give back to you those gifts you have first given us: “Our selves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love.” (LBW, p. 67.)

Group Bless these our gifts. Multiply them. And join them with the gifts of all the women throughout the church, so that ministries might happen and your name be blessed.

Reader 6 Blessed be your name, O God, throughout all the world. Be with us now as we commit ourselves to you and to each other: Go in Peace. Serve the Lord.

Group Thanks be to God.

JULY

Catherine Winkworth, hymn
writer, d. 1878.

Independence Day

ELCA men's organization
constituting convention (July 15-17)

ELCA Minority Youth Event
(July 20-30)

Mary Magdalene remembered

Birgitta of Sweden, d. 1373

Mary, Martha, and Lazarus of
Bethany remembered

ELCA Youth Gathering,
San Antonio (July 31-Aug. 4)

PREVIEW

MINISTRY AND ACTION

Donna Paulson calls readers to "engage in ministry and action," using their God-given *energeia* (Greek for "energy") to shape a wholesome community and world.

INSIDE THE WALLS

The story of a woman's ministry visiting a young man in jail.

LO, THE WINTER IS PAST

A potted geranium sets the stage for some spirit-filled reflection on the season of Pentecost.

BRINGING LIGHT INTO DARKNESS

A look at the services and ministry of the John Milton Society for the Blind, as it celebrates its 60th year of operation.

TO BE A LIVING TEMPLE

The Bible study draws some lessons for congregational life from Mark's account of the first part of Jesus' final week in Jerusalem.

*As a community of women
created in the image of God,
called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and
empowered by the Holy Spirit,*

We commit ourselves to
*grow in faith,
affirm our gifts,
support one another in our callings,
engage in ministry and action, and
promote healing and wholeness
in the church, the society,
and the world.*

**Purpose Statement,
Women of the ELCA**

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